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FINLETTER
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FROM KOHLER

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PASS DEFENSE SECY McNAMARA

I have real sympathy for tactical problem facing Finletter and Norstad here vis-a-vis NAC and member Governments, and am sure their telegrams represent accurate estimate reactions to be anticipated to Rusk and McNamara presentations as presently planned. Nub of problem, which they correctly feel calls into question consistency, dependability, and vigor American leadership, is to be found in ostensible conflict between US presentation put forward by Finletter April 26 and later US efforts, under instructions, put this on back of stove while pressing Berlin build-up. However fact that both efforts have met with disappointing reaction means to me that allies have in fact failed to face up to realities involved in real showdown with USSR and that two problems

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TELEGRAM

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Foreign Service of the
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problems have in fact merged at this stage. Therefore believe of some importance that basic rationale for non-nuclear build-up and preferred course of action, now supported by full information on respective US-USSR nuclear strengths, be placed on table with full authority Secretaries of State and Defense. However, this must be done in non-contentious manner, without direct assault on existing political directive and (assuming this militarily warranted) with assurances reasonable conventional posture would prevent seizure of NATO territory as now anticipated by Western allies. Thus it is not enough to say (as on pages 7 and 9 McNamara draft) "non-nuclear defense in Central Europe capable at least of holding a bloc ~~in~~ conventional attack for a substantial period" unless we can add something like "without significant incursions into NATO territory." Similarly, instead of frontal assault on "NATO political directive and NATO strategic concept" (page 10) we must make facts speak for themselves and leave to later analysis and appreciation by Allies and to further/in NAC question of appropriate adjustment of existing doctrine.

EUR:FDKohler:mt
12/7/61

GAVIN

Authorized by: Foy D. Kohler

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